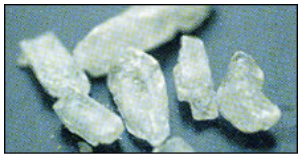


What are Methamphetamine Laboratories?

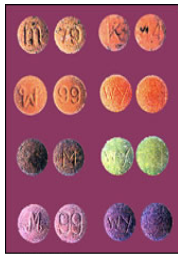
Methamphetamine is an addictive stimulant drug. It is primarily a street drug, known as "speed", "meth", "crank", and "crystal" and made in illegal laboratories by people who often have weapons and use the drug.



Methamphetamine powder

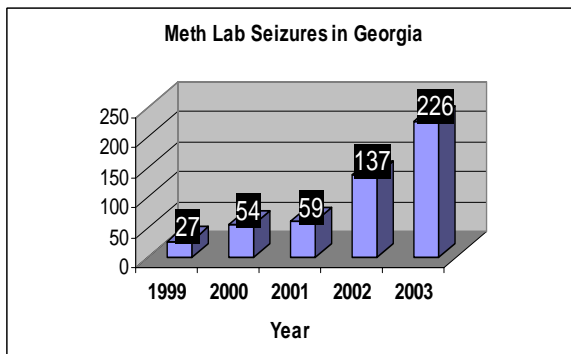


Ice methamphetamine



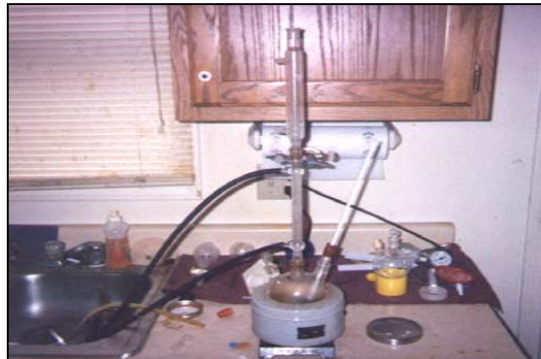
Yaba tablets

The number of laboratories used to make illegal methamphetamine (meth) is growing, and the number of labs seized by law enforcement agencies increases substantially each year. Meth labs are discovered in restaurants, motel rooms, houses, sheds, and motor vehicles, resulting in serious danger to communities and local health officials working in the field.



What are the Public Health Issues?

Like most laboratory practices, meth production yields hazardous waste byproducts. These chemicals include acids and bases, solvents, red phosphorous, drain cleaner, battery acid, lye, antifreeze, and metals. They can cause very severe acute and chronic health effects, have extreme potential for fire and explosion, and are caustic and corrosive. Most excess chemicals and byproducts end up dumped onto the ground or poured into septic systems, public sewage systems, ponds, and rivers.



Meth labs can be identified by corroded drains and rubber tubing leading to drains and toilets

Since this is an emerging problem, there is currently no official guidance or regulations on how to clean up a former meth property for reoccupation. Government agencies are working to find answers that will protect the public and be practical for property owners. Until a cleanup standard is determined, authorities advise owners to do their best to thoroughly clean up these properties. The safest way is to hire an environmental company trained in hazardous waste removal and cleanup.

What is the role of Georgia Public Health?

After a meth lab is seized by local law enforcement, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, or the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), a letter from the DEA is sent to the county health department and posted at the property, stating:

"As a result of the search of your residence and property, a clandestine drug laboratory was seized and hazardous chemicals and substances were found at said property. Known hazardous chemicals and substances were seized by law enforcement officials and have been disposed of pursuant to State and Federal Law. This letter serves as a notice and warning that there may still be hazardous substances or waste products at or on the aforementioned property. No action is necessary."

It is possible that a small amount of contamination will be left on surfaces and in absorbent materials (carpets, furniture), ventilation systems, plumbing, and soil. Though found in small amounts, these residues may pose health threats if you come into contact with them.

Many property owners are confused about their responsibility for additional clean up, and liability for future tenants. **Currently in Georgia, they have no legal responsibility to conduct additional cleanup.** However, to assist residents who want to ensure the safety of their property, we can offer guidance for actions they can take. These guidance steps are from other state health departments that have developed detailed protocols for addressing the public health concerns of those affected by meth labs.

Meth Lab Cleanup Guidance

Several states have developed guidelines to assist property owners and the general public in cleaning up former meth lab properties:

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
*Clandestine Methamphetamine Laboratory
Cleanup Guidelines*
www.healthyarkansas.com/pdf/adh_methguidelines_2004.pdf

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC
HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT
Cleanup Of Methamphetamine Labs
www.cdphe.state.co.us/hm/methlab.pdf

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
Cleaning Up Former Methamphetamine Labs
www.kdhe.state.ks.us/methlabs/ml_cleanup.html

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
*Clandestine Drug Labs General Cleanup
Guidelines*
www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/meth/lab/cleanup0903.pdf

OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH
*Guidelines for Cleaning Up Former
Methamphetamine Labs*
www.deq.state.ok.us/LPDnew/MethLabs/meth.htm

WISCONSIN DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
*Cleaning Up Hazardous Chemicals at
Methamphetamine Laboratories*
www.dhfs.state.wi.us/eh/ChemFS/fs/MethClnUp.htm

**If you suspect a
methamphetamine laboratory,
do not enter the area.**

Call 911

**or contact your local law
enforcement agency.**

Contact Information

For more information about public health issues associated with methamphetamine laboratories, please call the Chemical Hazards Program staff at the following phone numbers or visit our website:

<http://health.state.ga.us/programs/hazards>

Chemical Hazards Program

State Office, Atlanta (404) 657-6534

District Risk Communicators

District 1-1, Rome (706) 295-6569

District 3-5, DeKalb County (404) 508-7900

District 5-2, Macon (478) 751-6113

District 9-3, Brunswick (912) 264-3931

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METHAMPHETAMINE “METH” LABORATORIES



CHEMICAL HAZARDS PROGRAM

**Environmental Health
and Injury Prevention Branch**

DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

